

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of the present patent application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

In this Amendment claims 14-15 are amended, claims 60-61 are added, and no claims are canceled (claims 1-13, 23-27 and 43-46 were previously canceled). As a result, claims 14-22, 28-42 and 47-61 are now pending in the application. The claim amendments incorporate a feature of dependent claim 15 up into its parent claim, independent claim 14. Support for the newly added claims can be found in various portions of the specification, for example, in the second and third full paragraphs of page 13, the first paragraph of page 15, and the last paragraph of page 1.

In the non-final Office Action of January 8, 2007 claims 14-22, 47 and 52-59 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) in view of U.S. Patent 5,945,988 (Williams) and further in view of U.S. Patent 6,263,502 (Morrison). Claims 28-44 and 48-51 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) in view of Williams and further in view of U.S. Patent 5,389,963 (Lepley).

35 U.S.C. §103 Rejections

The §103 rejections in view of the hypothetical Williams / Morrison and Williams / Lepley combinations are respectfully traversed for at least the following reasons.

The present invention involves a convergence system. Typically, a convergence system includes a number of media devices such as a television and other video/audio components connected together with a computer. One disadvantage of a convergence system is that the output signal of each media device has characteristics and parameter values that may differ from

those of other media devices. For instance, although both a television tuner and a video disc player often have connectors labeled “LINE OUT,” the video and audio voltage levels, contrast compression, frequency bandwidths, and other parameters or characteristics of the two signals are almost always different enough to produce noticeable—often irritating—difference when a common audio or audio/video output device presents signals from the two different devices to a user. As a result, when switching back and forth between the television tuner and a video disc player, the user must readjust the parameters and settings of the output device to maintain a consistent display and/or volume level.

Modifying an Input Signal in Response to Selecting the Signal

The claims pending in the application recite features that overcome the disadvantages of conventional convergence systems. For example, the present invention involves a convergence system in which a plurality of signals are received (e.g., input signals from a satellite receiver, broadcast television, a VCR, etc.). The present invention also has a table of parameters associated with the signals from the input devices—parameters that can be used for altering the plurality of signals from the devices. Turning to the claims, claim 14 recites features for selecting one of a plurality of signals, retrieving a parameter corresponding to the selected signal, and modifying the signal in accordance with the retrieved parameter, “wherein the modifying of said one signal is performed in response to the selecting of said one selected signal.” The other independent claims recite similarly novel features. None of the documents cited in the Office Action disclose or suggest these features, either taken singly or in hypothetical combination.

The Williams patent involves a system for determining and applying user preferences in

an entertainment system. The Williams system monitors and records the user's activities with the system to update the user profile which is kept in a user profile database 700. The user preferences applied based on what user is watching television—not on what input signal is being received. Williams includes a processor agent to monitor user interaction with the entertainment system and automatically determining which user is interacting with the system. The Williams system applies the user parameters for a given device based on what user is automatically determined to be interacting with the system—not “in response to the selecting of said one selected signal,” as recited in claim 14 or similarly recited features of the other independent claims.

The Office Action also proposes the secondarily cited Lepley and Morrison patents to overcome various other deficiencies of the Williams patent different from the claimed features discussed above. Lepley involves a system for selectively interconnecting audio-video sources and receivers. Morrison involves a system for automatic audio and control settings for television programs. It is respectfully submitted that neither Lepley nor Morrison disclose or suggest the claimed features discussed above.

In addition to modifying the signal “in response to the selecting [the] signal,” it is also respectfully submitted that none of the cited documents disclose the modification of the signal itself. Instead, these documents teach to adjust the level (e.g., volume level) of the output device, rather than modifying the received input signal, as discussed in the following paragraphs.

Modifying Said One Signal

Independent claim 14 recites “modifying said one signal in accordance with said at least one retrieved parameter value to produce a modified one signal; ... wherein the modifying of said one signal is performed in response to the selecting of said one selected signal.”

Independent claim 28 recites “an input device, responsive to a selection command, for selecting said one input signal” and “an output controller coupled to said output device for setting said at least one parameter of said output signal in accordance with said one value [from said table].”

The other independent claims recite similar features.

The Office Action contends that Williams teaches this feature, stating that “Lines 19-29 [of Williams] clearly teaches modifying the volume according to the value specified in the user database 700.”¹ It should be noted that the claims do not merely recite changing the volume level of a television set. The claims recite “modifying said one signal” (claim 14) and “setting said at least one parameter of said output signal” (claim 28). Thus, the claims recite features that adjust parameters with the signal itself, rather than merely changing the setting of the device playing the signal. By contrast, the Williams system changes the setting (e.g., the volume) of the device playing the signal. In fact, the passage of the Williams patent immediately following the Office Action’s citation explains that the system configuration changes are altered—not that the signals are modified:

Having determined which user of a plurality of users is currently using system 100 in step 204, system controller 104 dynamically configures system configuration settings of system 100 in accordance with the user preference information found in the user profile corresponding to the identified user.²

¹ Office Action of Jan. 8, 2007, page 3, 3rd paragraph (emphasis in original).

Thus, Williams appears to teach away from claimed feature of modifying the signals, and instead teach to set the configuration settings of the component devices in the system 100 of Williams.

The Office Action proposes secondarily cited Morrison patent to overcome other deficiencies of Williams. The Morrison patent does not overcome the deficiency of the Williams system changing the volume settings rather than altering the signals. Instead of transmitting a modified signal, Morrison adjusts the television to “change the audio and video settings to match those in the table based on the program data thereby yielding the optimal viewing conditions.”³ The Lepley patent, which pertains to a system for selectively interconnecting home media devices also does not teach or suggest these features of the claimed invention.

In the event the rejection is maintained, it is respectfully requested that the next Office Action explain how the cited patents are being construed to teach or suggest “modifying said one signal” and/or “setting said at least one parameter of said output signal,” as recited in the claims.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the Williams patent and the Lepley patent, either taken singly or as a hypothetical combination, do not teach or suggest the claimed features. Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

² Williams, col. 5, lines 30-35.

³ Morrison, col. 2, lines 61-64.

Deposit Account Authorization / Provisional Time Extension Petition

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this, concurrent and future replies, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 50-0439 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. However, in the event there are any unresolved issues, the Examiner is kindly invited to contact applicant's representative, Scott Richardson, by telephone at (571) 748-4765 so that such issues may be resolved as expeditiously as possible.

Respectfully submitted,



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